

Message Text

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SUBJ: PRIME MINISTER ADDRESSES ONTARIO MEMBERS OF FEDERAL
LIBERAL CAUCUS

1. ON OCTOBER 2 PRIME MINISTER TRUDEAU DELIVERED A SPEECH IN TORONTO TO A POLICY CONFERENCE ORGANIZED BY ONTARIO MEMBERS OF HIS FEDERAL LIBERAL CAUCUS. SPEECH WAS EXTEMPORANEOUS BUT ITS STARTLING NATURE CAUSED IT TO RECEIVE EXTENSIVE COVERAGE IN CANADIAN PRESS. HIS THEME WAS EXPRESSED IN ONE SENTENCE OF HIS SPEECH WHICH TORONTO GLOBE AND MAIL USED AS A HEADLINE: "WE HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT OUR FUTURE AS A NATIONAL PARTY".
 2. IN STARK TERMS, TRUDEAU OUTLINED CHALLENGE FACING THE LIBERAL PARTY. HE CLAIMED "WE ARE OUT OF TOUCH WITH LARGE SECTIONS OF THE GRASS ROOTS. WEST OF THE ONTARIO-MANITOBA BORDER WE EXIST AS A THIRD PARTY... WE HAVE TO ADMIT THE PARTY IS NOT WELL ORGANIZED." WHEN SPEAKING OF SEPARATISM HE SAID "IF WE (CANADA) SPLIT UP, IT WON'T BE ANY MORE HARMONIOUS...TO THINK THAT THIS WOULD SOLVE THE PROBLEM OF HATE AND INTER-NEICINE WARFARE, WELL, WE ARE KIDDING OURSELVES... MY FELLOW FRENCH-CANADIANS DON'T SEEM TO UNDERSTAND THAT IF QUEBEC SEPARATE THEY'LL HAVE TO
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SPEAK MORE ENGLISH AND NOT LESS...IF QUEBEC SEPARATES

WE CAN FORGET ABOUT A BILINGUAL CANADA." HE ALSO ATTACKED QUEBEC'S BILL 22 AND SAID THAT AS LIBERALS TALKED OF BILINGUALISM, "QUEBEC HAS STARTED TO TALK OF UNILINGUALISM. ALL I CAN DO IS REGRET...".

3. TURNING TO THE LIBERAL PARTY'S AILING FORTUNES IN THE POLLS, TRUDEAU SAID THAT HE DID NOT THINK THEIR POLICY SIMPLY SHOULD BE TO REGAIN POPULARITY. "THE OBJECTIVE IS TO FIND THOSE RIGHT ANSWERS TO THE PROPER QUESTIONS BEING ASKED AT THIS TIME. IT IS IN THAT THAT OUR PARTY WILL STAKE OUT ITS ROLE IN THE FUTURE OF OUR NATION AND HELP SHAPE ITS DESTINY... WE DON'T HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT NOT BEING POPULAR, BUT WE MUST WORRY ABOUT NOT BEING RIGHT." ACKNOWLEDGING THE PROBLEM THE LIBERAL PARTY HAS IN THE WEST, HE SAID "THAT WE HAVE FAILED TO RECONQUER THE WEST IN POLITICAL TERMS IS A VERY SERIOUS INDICTMENT OF OUR PARTY... THE LOYALTY OF QUEBECERS TO THE LIBERAL PARTY, INSPITE OF THE MANY YEARS WHEN WE HAD ONLY MINORITY SUPPORT FROM ENGLISH-SPEAKING CANADA, IS A SOURCE OF CONCERN AND NOT OF CONSOLATION."

4. TO RESPOND TO THE CHALLENGE, TRUDEAU CALLED FOR GREATER SACRIFICES, "THE SACRIFICE OF ACCEPTING CONTROLS... IT IS NOT SURPRISING THIS ISSUE IS HURTING THE PARTY...BUT WE HAVE TO DO A LOT OF WORK TO MAKE (THE PEOPLE) NOT WANT TO GET EVEN AT ELECTION TIME..."

5. COMMENT: FRANKNESS OF SPEECH HAS APPEALED TO CANADIAN PRESS AND UNDOUBTEDLY DID "STUN LIBERALS" AS ONE HEADLINE CLAIMED. HIS MESSAGE WAS CLEAR: PLACE MORE EMPHASIS ON DEFENDING POLICY LIKE BILINGUALISM, EVEN AT THE RISK OF FURTHER UNPOPULARITY, OR FACE THE PROSPECT OF BEING THE PARTY IN POWER AT THE COLLAPSE OF CONFEDERATION. RESPECTED GLOBE AND MAIL COLUMNIST GEOFFREY STEVENS ENTITLED HIS ARTICLE "BRILLIANT BUT MELANCHOLY". ACCORDING TO STEVENS, TORONTO SPEECH MAY BE THE POINT AT WHICH THE TURN-AROUND (OF LIBERAL POPULARITY) WILL BEGIN. ON THE OTHER HAND, "IF THE LIBERALS DROWN IN THE SLOUGH OF DESPOND, THE TORONTO SPEECH LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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MAYBE VIEWED AS THE MOMENT AT WHICH THEIR SLIDE BECAME IRREVERSIBLE." STEVENS DOES CRITICIZE SPEECH FOR SOME "HYPERBOLIC CLAPTRAP" FOR STATING, AS AN EXAMPLE, THAT THE CHALLENGE OF THE LIBERAL PARTY IS ALSO THE CHALLENGE OF CANADA. BUT ON THE WHOLE, IT IS CLEAR THAT TRUDEAU'S SPEECH HAS HAD A CONSIDERABLE IMPACT ON LIBERALS AND ON THE PRESS.
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